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MISSIONS: GOVERNMENTS: AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

BY

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(Of St. Augustine's Mission, Penhalonga.)

Problems of the Mission Field.

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PREFACE.

By the Editorial Secretary of the S.P.G.

THIS pamphlet is one of a series of which the object is to bring to the notice of supporters and friends of the S.P.G. the chief problems arising from the actual situation in the mission field to-day.

The writers have done their work quite independently of one another, and it has been as little edited as possible. The inconvenience of occasional over-lapping and the expression of opinions not always mutually consistent would seem to be outweighed by the advantage of allowing each contributor to express his mind freely. It must not be assumed that the S.P.G. is committed to the views of any of them, though they have been asked to write because they might reasonably be supposed to be, on many points, in sympathy with one another and with the general policy of the Society.

The questions with which they deal are those which the missionaries of all Christian Communions are called upon to face to-day. Most of these questions are referred to in the World Call Reports, and have been discussed, in recent years, both within the various missionary organisations and in conferences on a world-wide scale, such as the international and inter-denominational meeting

at Jerusalem in 1928 and the international gathering of Roman Catholic missionaries held annually at Louvain. But the reports of such conferences are often of great length and are not always easily accessible. We hope, therefore, that the present series may be found useful by the general reader who has the missionary cause at heart.

Each pamphlet states briefly a particular question and gives the writer's suggestions towards an answer to it. Few, perhaps none, of our present-day problems of missionary policy are really new. But they must be considered to-day in relation to the circumstances of a world which is undergoing more rapid and bewildering changes than in any previous period.

Fr. Cotton deals with the relation of Christian missions to the dominant 'European' governments of Africa in regard to the education of the native peoples: a matter on which he writes from personal experience both in the South African Union and in Southern Rhodesia. A similar problem arises in other parts of the world, but the form it takes varies with differences of nationality, of government, and of the degree of civilization attained by the people among whom the missions are at work. From the point of view of the English reader, perhaps the most interesting setting of the problem is that which will be found in the contact of Christian educational activities with the life of highly civilized and politically independent, but

non-Christian, peoples like the Chinese and the Japanese. In China, where the high honour given to learning and literary attainments is well known, mission schools and colleges have hitherto had an important place in Christian enterprise. The recent nationalist revolution and the natural desire of the government that the whole people should receive an education on national lines has inevitably led to difficulties between the government and the foreign missionaries. The complete solution of the questions raised is not yet in sight; but the following notes sent us by a missionary on the S.P.G. list will give us some idea of the present situation :—

"The relations," he writes, "between the Chinese government and missions on the education question have reached a crucial stage, and it is somewhat difficult to foresee what the fate of mission schools will be. For some considerable time it has been the stipulation of the Chinese government that all mission educational institutions, from the primary school to the university, should register with the government, but very few missions have done this. Towards the end of 1928, probably on account of the rapid growth of an intense national spirit among the people, an order was issued making registration compulsory. Further, all applications for registration were to reach the proper education authority before June 30th, 1929. Mission schools failing to comply with this order would be forcibly closed. The nature of the

particulars required for registration seem to point to a strong anti-Christian bias in the matter of education, together with an equally strong determination of the authorities to have under Chinese control all educational institutions. These points will perhaps become more clear by giving in detail some of the regulations. Concerning religious teaching the regulations state :—

> "All religious teaching must be on a voluntary basis, and all such teaching must be outside the ordinary school curriculum.
>
> "Attendance at Church services must be entirely voluntary.

"With regard to school management it is stipulated that the principal of the school must be Chinese, and that the school must be governed by a Board of managers of which the chairman and the majority of the members must be Chinese. Again it is stated that the school must be staffed by properly qualified teachers, the majority to be specialists; also that the school buildings and equipment must be of a 'satisfactory' standard. Such are some of the regulations which may very well closely affect the future of mission schools. Some schools have registered and are carrying on their work, while others have found it impossible to comply with the regulations affecting religious instruction and have closed. Others have made application and await the result.

"The interpretation of registration regulations and the attitude of the provincial education authorities towards mission schools differs greatly in the various provinces.

"In Fu Chien and Chihli many schools have registered without difficulty and receive sympathetic consideration from the provincial education authorities, while in Shantung the head of the education authority has openly stated that 'No Christian school, whatever its standing, will be allowed to register.' Such a declaration may, however, have no force with the central government; on the other hand, it does evidence the great lack of centralised control on matters of importance.

"In the matter of buildings, equipment, and attainment, though the term 'satisfactory standard' is used, it is impossible to get any idea of what is required.

"Even if mission schools are accepted for registration there is no definite suggestion that they will receive financial assistance, although doing national work in the approved form set out by the national education authority.

"Finally, as long as mission schools can maintain a Christian staff and be governed by a Christian Board of managers, there is every hope that the good work done in them will continue in spite of the many irksome regulations imposed. If this proves impossible, then it were better to close the schools voluntarily, even though this may involve

confiscation and utilisation of school buildings by the Chinese government."

In Japan the situation is not so complicated. Here we are dealing to-day with a more 'Westernised' people, a more stable polity, and a government explicitly tolerant of Christianity. Japanese statesmen acknowledge the valuable contribution made by missionaries, in an advisory capacity, to the development of modern Japan. Now that there is throughout the country a state system of education, from the elementary school to the university, these schools have found their place in the national system without losing their definitely Christian character. They are owned and staffed by the missions, but they are under government control on the secular side and their head masters are now, in almost every instance, Japanese. Most of them are "middle schools" for boys and girls of from thirteen to eighteen years of age. They are attended both by Christian and by non-Christian children; a 'conscience clause' protects those who do not desire definite Christian teaching, but are not impatient of the Christian atmosphere. The system seems to be working fairly smoothly, and the relation between the missions and the government (in regard to education) is less difficult than that between the Church and the State in some nominally Christian countries of the West.

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Missions : Governments : and Christian Education.

I.

The relations of Church and State are nowhere more interesting and important than in South and East Africa. For there in the co-operation of Christian missions with the various governments an age-long problem has entered on a new phase. As the situation in this great section of Africa has no close parallel in any other part of the world, I had better make no attempt to extend the scope of this discussion to other continents or even to western Africa. Nevertheless, right answers to the questions here asked cannot fail to be of interest elsewhere, and those answers cannot be formulated without drawing lessons from the experience of other countries, especially the West Indies, the United States of America, and India, as well as Nigeria and the Gold Coast.

A partnership in the work of educating the native Africans has been struck between the missions and the various British governments. Is this sound policy? And, if so, what are the chief conditions of its success? Thoughtfully considered, and not just taken for granted, it is a striking fact that the governments in Africa have accepted the missions as their principal agents in

the work of native education. It has not been so in the home-lands of the missions and of the government officials. Yet it is true to-day in Africa that the governments are subsidizing our missions with monies for education. The opportunity may not last, but it is now inviting our earnest attention. How has it come about?

Taxes were imposed on the natives in the first instance with an eye to sending them to work for the European immigrants in their mining and agricultural industries, and in opening up the country by roads and railways. Of course there was the cost of government itself to be met, but it could not fail to be suggested to the public conscience that the large proportion of the colonial revenues thus contributed by Africans must mean large expenditures on their education. And there were the missions working away at it and greatly in need of financial assistance to enable them to do it properly. It was clear too that the beginnings of advance towards civilized citizenship could not be made if the African notions of the invisible world and of all the unseen background of what happens on the stage of human life, were just to be left alone. Especially it was clear that so long as a belief in magical causes of every unwonted happening, of every sickness, of every failure of crops, persisted, or so long as the affairs of the world and mankind were thought to be subject to the capricious interference of ancestral spirits,

scientific explanations of the working of nature could not find lodging in the African mind. Yet these old heathen ideas could not be eradicated by the mere fiat of common-sense. They must be replaced by ideas that satisfy the mind's instinct for a spiritual environment as well as set it free to go on lines of inquiry that experience has tested. Here, again, there was no alternative to the Christian religion. Mohammedanism when seen from this point of view is absolutely hopeless. Besides, it is intuitively recognized that no solidly Mohammedan land in Africa can be a congenial home for the European colonists who are such an important factor in our African colonies.

Then, again, finance. However honourable the governments may be in their wish to lay out a fair share of native tax receipts upon native education, they will find it difficult to meet the growing demands of modern educational methods in Africa. The limit of expenditure warranted by those receipts has by no means been reached as yet. But with normal development it soon will be reached. As the tax money comes from all parts and corners of the colony, educational facilities cannot rightly be confined to a few centres. They must be pushed forward everywhere in return for the people's enforced contributions. The education of the African must be conceived as reaching to the remotest villages and kraals

of every colony. The urgent desire of the missionary to occupy the whole field may need to be curbed: but it is a valuable reinforcement to the governments' sense of what is their plain duty. The example of India points the moral that the effort must be to raise the native people as a whole rather than to produce an *intelligentsia* disconnected from the fortunes of the main body and so incapacitated from serving its interests. Yet it will not be possible to increase the burden of taxation on the natives, in South Africa at least, *pari passu* with the expanding educational requirements. More and more they will need the money they earn for purchasing what are set before them by our example and our commerce as the necessaries of life. More and more, like the poorer classes in England, their free education must be a charge on the incomes of the well-to-do. And these, in South Africa, are neither so willing nor so able to pay taxes for such a purpose. For they are Europeans. They have their own children to educate and their own future to secure. They hold themselves very much aloof from the educational interests of the Africans. The governments may be supposed to have seen, therefore, the need of financial help for native education from philanthropic sources. And, as a dependable agency for tapping these, none could compare with Christian missions and their supporters in Europe, Great Britain, and America.

II.

Such being the approach of the governments to the co-operative endeavour we are considering, let us pass on to that of the missions. I have spoken of the missionary's earnest desire to occupy the whole field. This, of course, has primary reference to the spread of the Christian religion itself, to the evangelization of the heathen, and to the extension of the Church's pastoral work from village to village. The missionary looks forward to the day when a network of parishes will cover Africa from end to end and when the church bells will be heard, as in England itself, on every countryside. As he travels through the African veld or bush country, opening many out-stations, one after another, in response to the African mass movement towards Christianity, he is impressed and encouraged by the readiness and competence of the native men who come forward to be trained as teachers, catechists and clergy. He catches the vision and the hope of a vast army of these going out to the farthest limits of the land. But armies require organization and support. Parishes must be administered according to some plan. The enthusiasm of the evangelization period dies down and there must be a method and a system designed to promote the spiritual advancement of the converts in every place—and the Christian training of their children. I suppose the missionary's

simplest justification of his desire to organize and build schools, would be that reading needs to be acquired in the Christian community so that the New Testament can be studied in every home and Christian literature be put to use. There is the necessity also of training native catechists, preachers and priests. These, at any rate, cannot be sent forth without being given some access to books. And for their training there must be at least some schools. But these reasons have been supplemented by the whole trend of modern educational policy. The ideal of education for life, visualizing a worthy mode of life for the people, preparing the young to grasp it in thought and action, inducing the elders to encourage it by their hearty acceptance, fitted in exactly with the missionary's aims. The whole system of school method seemed exactly adapted, if it could but be inspired with the Church's faith and filled with Christ's spirit, to the moral edification and discipline of the native Christian community.

III.

In the course of my own experience I have been led to compare two systems which are being tested, for the support of schools in connexion with missionary work. In the Transvaal (and the same system extends, I think, throughout the whole of the Union of South Africa) the mission

school teacher is trained in a missionary normal college, is appointed and supervised by a district missionary *and is paid by the government,* subject to the satisfactory reports of a government inspector. He is not the missionary's local agent for the spiritual care of the children and their parents, this being the office of a catechist. The catechist is supported by the voluntary contributions of the congregation. He takes the services, visits the sick, buries the dead, and carries on the work of Christian ministry as well as he can. Frequently he is not a whole-time worker and must make his own living as other natives do. He is often very little in advance of his people as regards book learning and is usually less educated than the school teacher. This is often true even of the native deacon or priest whom it may have been possible to appoint instead of a catechist for the local pastorate. The missionary, who has charge of a dozen or more of such out-stations, experiences difficulty in this system chiefly in three ways. First he cannot depend, as he feels he ought to be able to depend, on the help of the school teacher in the religious instruction of the community or on his harmonious co-operation with the local catechist. As a government-paid agent he is apt to sit lightly to Church duties. Secondly the missionary finds it a heavy burden to pay the salaries of native catechists and clergy and to maintain a tolerable

standard in this service. The local church can have a priest's visit not more than once a month or once a quarter, and the local pastor is often quite inadequate for his task. Thirdly in many out-stations there are no schools at all; for the missionary finds it almost impossible to maintain them except where the government will pay the teacher. And consequently the extension of the Church's schools must wait on the adequacy of parliamentary votes for native education, which can by no means be counted on as answering to the demands of generosity or fair play.

In the course of searching for some alternative to the above system of co-operation between missions and governments in native education I have spent five years in Southern Rhodesia. There and throughout the greater part of central Africa things have developed differently. The local school and church (one building must suffice for both as a rule) have gone together much more closely. Out-stations are opened from the start as schools as well as churches. The missionary's one local worker has been teacher as well as preacher. Preparation for baptism and the teaching of the three R's (very elementary) have alike been undertaken by the schools, and the Church's educational and pastoral effort has centred on and been exercised by one man in each place. The quality of both spiritual and secular teaching has of course been conditioned by the training which

it has been possible to give to the local pastor-teachers. But on the whole the results attained have been encouraging—to those at least who are content to make haste slowly. The members of the Christian community can as a rule read their own language, and their first steps in religious progress have been guided by men educationally in advance of the average. The governments have come in to help, and they have helped according to the numbers of scholars attending school, so much per head, with a good deal of generous forbearance and encouragement and with a minimum of inspection. In the district with which I was familiar, rather more than half the total sum required for the maintenance of our pastor-teachers was contributed by the government, the missionary organization finding the balance as well as being responsible for school and church buildings and for other incidental expenses. Of late there have been set up government departments of native education, and it remains to be seen whether they will build on these foundations or whether they will change over to the system above described as obtaining in the Union of South Africa. It is my own wish that they will not hastily adopt the latter course.

I have come to think that the whole system of missionary organizations, of central institutions and high schools, and of government education departments should be judged as instrumental to

the training for, and the maintenance in, each little African community of a teacher, a *persona,* charged with the enlightenment and shepherding of the people—the young and the old together. It may well be, I think, that the testing of the partnership of missions with governments thus far sketched will resolve itself into the simple question whether this *persona,* who is the teacher subsidized by the government, can also in every place be the ordained priest or the unordained pastor, charged with the Church's ministries on behalf of the flock of God. Can this be the normal unit of educational and parochial organization? Can one set of men (with assistants where required, both male and female) be planted out in the field of Africa to "educate the people for life," to persuade and train them to advance on successively higher levels, up to the apprehension of things invisible and eternal? If it can be so, consideration for the poverty of the natives—and poverty will be for the most part their continuing lot—must compel a determined effort to make it so. This means that in addition to the government's tax money and the gifts of the philanthropic, there will be considerable amounts of free-will, "church" offerings from the people, available for the maintenance of their teachers. Of course the financial consideration cannot be decisive. But it is certainly strong enough to attract our most serious attention to such questions

as these that follow. Will our local spiritual pastors be hindered in watching for the souls of their people if they have on their hands the exacting responsibilities of teaching the young in village day schools? Or, on the contrary, can it be shown that their ministry will be rather strengthened by this routine of duty? Can it be shown that the intimate knowledge of the children that it will ensure, is exactly what will keep the Church's evangelistic and sacramental ministry most vitally in touch with the people and their future? May it not be that in the personal discipline of his life the African needs a definite daily task, and that so his ready humour, his patience, and his great joy in self-expression, will find fullest scope, and tropical inertia be given no chance to settle down upon him? To be answerable to the exactingness of a school every day, and to be a responsible figure in a constant environment, is probably far more wholesome for any normal man in Africa than the changeful and unmethodical life of an itinerant evangelist or priest, with his ups and downs of futility and achievement, of vigour and weariness, tending to gloom or vainglory. Unless the village teachers of Africans are to be also their spiritual pastors, an itinerating ministry of the word and sacraments would seem to be the only alternative. For, apart from finance, the two offices being separate, it is difficult to conceive a harmonious co-operation

between a mission school head teacher having the moral leadership assigned him by the educational ideals of the day, and a resident native priest in his service of the same community. Again, may it not be that the requirement of advancing educational qualifications and of the schoolmaster's character and qualifications and capacity, in our native clergy, will prevent the spread of an easy emotional form of religious profession? May it not counteract that exaggeration of Protestant sectarianism which has always rendered African Christianity so much at the mercy of ignorant preachers?

Finally, religious education is integral to education in general. Religion cannot really be taught as a subject apart. Its inculcation is best effected as it permeates every classroom, every exercise, and every game. Baron von Hügel, in taking careful thought for the religious development of a soul very dear to him, recommends long readings of the history and classics of our civilization. So, on the very different level of African village life and education, it may be found that the Christian religion will take deepest hold of the African mind when presented as an essential part of the one whole gift of Christendom; and this may be best secured by the provision that the presentation is the office of one person in every place. Behind him will be the great system of the Church in its partnership for education with

the government. Behind him will be the training college, the superintendents, the inspectors, the bishop, and those whom he sends for special evangelistic and spiritual purposes. But all the riches of this variously ministered heritage of the ages will pour into the little African community through the one channel, their schoolmaster-priest or their pastor-teacher.

IV.

The misgivings that press into the mind in considering these plans of partnership come from two directions. Educationists will ask : can the missions do what is expected of them? Can they carry out efficiently the educational designs of the experts by whom the government is advised? Can the missionary superintendents work harmoniously with the government directors and inspectors? Can men whose solicitude is mainly for the religious awakening and redemption of the people and their training in the worship of God—can these men give their painstaking care to teaching arithmetic and to all the detail of community welfare in African villages and urban areas? They may be persuaded that the work must be done and that it can all be interfused with the religious spirit. But can they do it? Can they organize it? Obviously there is room for great variety of response to the demand. Even among

the experts there is no exact science of educational method. It is a living thing constantly adapting itself to new conditions. In regard to educational efficiency, while the government inspectors must endeavour to secure, amid the great variety, and the different methods of a dozen Christian denominations, a certain unity of purpose; and while they will have power to eliminate inefficient schools from the government-aided list; they can have no control of the *personnel* of mission schools. But, indeed, there seems no substantial reason to doubt that the Church can meet the demands. It will be spurred on to do so as it recognizes that the native people themselves desire to progress along just those lines of material well-being which it is the government's aim to open for them. The chief condition of success would seem to be, simply, that the Church should unreservedly throw herself into the educational endeavour, train her agents thoroughly, and accept it as a normal thing for her clergy to be school teachers. The Church of England, at any rate, has warrant for this. The great public and grammar schools of England have had many clerical headmasters, and have included very many of the clergy on their teaching staffs. On the other hand, the Church's effort in the national schools, whose teachers are paid by government, often seems weak and futile. May not this be just because the clergy have not been employed

as teachers here except for religious instruction? May not the following of this tradition in Africa be the cause of the misgivings concerning the Church's competence in school work?

On the other side, it is feared that this close relationship with the government, this dependence on government aid for the support of many of her ministers, may impair the Church's spiritual independence. It is clear that government directors of education must exercise great self-restraint. They must not think of missions as sub-departments or of missionaries as civil servants. They must not broadly hint the Church's subservience as a subsidized organization. They must not think to ride rough-shod over the Church's principles, traditions, or even prejudices. They must expect to find the missionary constantly preoccupied with spiritual aims. They must not for administrative convenience try to force religious co-operation or reunion. They can but set limits to the possibilities of denominational rivalry by such regulations as that no new school shall be established within three miles of another in country districts. They must often be content to confine themselves to their one inescapable duty of securing that the native people shall get full educational value for the money that the government spends on mission schools.

But, again (and here the need is greatest for reassurance), it is feared that by accepting these

subsidies from the government the Church will compromise her liberty of witness to social justice on behalf of the natives. Missionaries must be free to attack oppressive and demoralizing government action—or inaction. How can they be so if their work depends so largely on the favour of those whom they must attack, and if every rebuke renders them liable to a crippling withdrawal of needed financial support? Space forbids our entering on a discussion of this question here. I will conclude with a governmental profession of duty that can hardly be quoted too often :—

"The Union Government" (it was declared in 1927) "firmly believe in and adhere to the principle that it is the duty of every civilized government to devise ways and means, and to take all possible steps, for the uplifting of every section of their permanent population to the full extent of their capacity and opportunities."

Missionaries will loyally hope that the pledge may be faithfully carried out, and that so the co-operative part which the Church has undertaken may be justified and blessed.

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